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This book is packed with information and argument from cover to cover. There is no padding here, nothing superfluous or repetitious, but every page carries a fact, a piece of inside information, an opinion, a portrait of a man, or a description of a scene, all marshalled with such skill, all presented in so simple and direct a manner, that the cumulative force of the narrative is very great. One who does not admire the workmanship must be a poor workman himself.

This does not, of course, mean that the reader is bound to follow the author in all his arguments or conclusions. M. Tardieu gives us many statements and documents which we are in no position to control, the conference not having erred on the side of liberality in the publication of its proceedings. He gives certain personal appreciations or estimates from which the reviewer at least would dissent. But his book is not a book you are at liberty to reject because you dislike Clemenceau and consider Tardieu Clemenceau's man. Tardieu is no man's man, but he is an extremely capable and experienced individual quite able to take care of himself in debate. There is no easy way of getting around his book. The only way is to undermine it by better evidence and stronger arguments than his, and before you accomplish that, you will know what a rude campaign is like. For Tardieu is not a master of the loose word but of the weighty and the well-considered; and journalese denunciation will not remove him from the scene or wither him away.

Moreover, while he does not purr over his ideals in season and out, as we Americans are apt to do over ours, insisting on their being very vocal, nevertheless he has them, and very respectable ones at that, as we who are by our own admission the world's great connoisseurs in ideals must recognize, if we read this remarkable book with attentiveness and discernment.

CHARLES DOWNER HAZEN.

Queen Victoria. By LYTTON STRACHEY. New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921.—434 pp.

This enchanting volume is not a history of the Victorian age but the portraiture of a woman. The important events of England's history from the premiership of Lord Melbourne to the close of the nineteenth century serve only as an inconspicuous background against which the figures of the Queen, her husband, and her ministers stand out in sharp relief. It is another volume of "eminent

Victorians" that Mr. Strachey has given us. And the same wizardry of delineation that made Cardinal Manning and Thomas Arnold almost step out of the pages of the earlier book in flesh and blood (like the legendary Highlanders who step out of their frames on the castle walls) here depicts to the life the personages, from Lehzen and the Duchess of Kent, through Melbourne, Albert, Palmerston and Disraeli, to the slavish devotion of that tyrant-toper John Brown, whose successive influences shaped the Queen's will. Strachey's work is pure art. The elementary ingredients—voluminous state papers, memoirs, biographies, journals, articles—never obtrude. They are all distilled, by the skilful alchemy of the spirit, into a narrative as fresh and distinctive as some delicious perfume, with no trace of the odor of coal tar, acids, or the heavy atmosphere of the laboratory.

Charm of style, like every other charm, is indefinable. It is something which one either has or has not. Mr. Strachey has it in abounding measure. His readers turn page after page with the never disappointed anticipation of literary gratifications to come; the subtle phrase, the arresting adjective, the sudden amazing juxtaposition of incongruities, the delicious humor, the eloquent reticences, the inimitable characterizations. Mr. Strachey is like the clever artist who gives you a whole personality, almost to the particular shade of religious faith, with a half a dozen strokes of the pencil. What more do we need to complete the picture of King William IV than "the bursting, bubbling old gentleman with quarter-deck gestures, round rolling eyes, and a head like a pineapple", and "a tongue of rattling indomitability and loud indiscreetness"! And Mr. Gladstone, who "spoke to the Queen as if she were a public meeting" and "viewed her through a haze of awe which was almost religious—a sacrosanct embodiment of venerable traditions—a vital element in the British Constitution—a Queen by Act of Parliament"—is he not before us in all the solemnity befitting the champion of mid-Victorian Liberalism!

Irony has been defined as "seriousness without solemnity". Mr. Strachey pierces the pomp and circumstance surrounding the Victorian figures with an inexorable clairvoyance of common sense. At times one is tempted to think that his irony has lost even its seriousness and become a little malicious. No one escapes his sarcastic shafts, from the "nasty old uncles" at the beginning of the book to the parenetic "cottagers at Balmoral" at its end. Melbourne's worried *insouciance*, Palmerston's precipitate confidence, and above all Disraeli's oily chivalry, are set forth in inimitable style. There is

admiration for the life-long consistency of Baron Stockmar in trying to stem the tide of democracy in England, a dry appreciation of Prince Albert's encouragement of industry public and private, and recognition of the laudable attempts of the Liberals in the 'seventies to put through various reforms. But in general Mr. Strachey, like most men of keen humor and wide circumspectuity, chooses to observe and comment rather than to pronounce judgments or urge theories.

Some critics of the book have maintained that Mr. Strachey gives Prince Albert, for the first time, his due place in the policies of the reign. It is true that Albert bulks large in the narrative, only about one-fourth of the book being devoted to the period after his death. It is true also that his influence over the Queen replaced that of her ministers soon after the royal marriage, and remained potent long after his death. Nevertheless, to the reviewer Mr. Strachey seems to attribute little political power to Albert, "*proprio vigore*". Behind Albert was Stockmar. The Prince Consort was the mouthpiece of the German Baron. He was always a foreigner. In twenty years of undisputed ascendancy over the Queen he failed to deflect the English government seriously from its trend toward democracy. Mr. Strachey conjectures (in the sole passage in which he indulges in prophecy) that if Albert had lived twenty years longer "an attempt might have been made to convert England into a State as exactly organized, as elaborately trained, as efficiently equipped, and as autocratically controlled as Prussia herself. Then perhaps, eventually, under some powerful leader—a Gladstone or a Bright—the democratic forces in the country might have rallied together, and a struggle might have followed in which the Monarchy would have been shaken to its foundations" (p. 299). It is possible, of course, but highly improbable, that any such thing could have happened in the England of the generation following the Reform Bill, the England of the actual heyday of Liberalism. The unavailing efforts of the Queen herself to get her people to appraise her "dear Albert" at his true value show how little likely he was to "convert" England to any other kind of state than that which she was growing to be in the give-and-take of Parliamentary party government. Queen Victoria was the faithful executrix of her husband's political will and testament in every particular, and yet, even with the increasing popularity which age and dignity brought, she was unable to stem the steady tide of ministerial encroachment on the prerogative of the crown. The prestige of the sovereign increased, but the power of the sovereign waned. "Paradoxically enough", says Strachey him-

self, "Victoria received the highest eulogiums for assenting to a political evolution which, had she completely realized its import, would have filled her with supreme displeasure" (p. 441).

When one asks, what, in fine, is Mr. Strachey's opinion of the Queen as a ruler and a woman, one finds it difficult to answer in a word. A frankness sometimes almost brutal reveals her limitations of intellect, her unschooled will, her constant intrusion of personal exactions and antipathies into the established rules of the Parliamentary game, her superabundant emotionalism, gushing at seventeen over various sets of "dear, dear cousins", and insisting at eighty that her "dear Albert's" clothing should be laid out on his bed every morning and his basin filled with fresh water, as though he had not been dead for forty years. An irony sometimes almost cruel exposes the Queen's hopeless mid-Victorianism: her "solid, laborious respectability", her platitudinous, conventional religiosity, her voluble tasteless rhetoric (she once spoke of her uncle Leopold as "one of the first politicians now extant"—as if he were a species of elk!), and even her sorry appearance "in garish middle-class garments", with "her face turned red in the heat" and her "purple pork-pie hat of last year's fashion", by the side of her visitor, the Empress Eugénie, who, "cool and modish, floated in an infinitude of flounces" (p. 273).

Yet Mr. Strachey really esteems this Queen with her "fat capable hands". At the end the sunlight gloriously bursts through the clouds of qualification and innuendo which drift through the book. As the author joins the magnificent procession of the Diamond Jubilee in 1897, tears of grateful satisfaction well in his eyes, too. "Duty, conscience, morality—yes! in the light of those high beacons the Queen had always lived. She had passed her days in work and not in pleasure—in public responsibilities and family cares. The standard of solid virtue which had been set up so long ago amid the domestic happiness of Osborne had never been lowered for an instant. . . . The girl, the wife, the aged woman were the same: vitality, conscientiousness, pride, and simplicity were hers to the latest hour" (pp. 415, 419). The closing obituary is a prose poem of surpassing and pathetic beauty, reviewing a life as justly free from reproach or regret as that of any mortal who has worn a crown.

DAVID S. MUZZEY.